

Virginia Agricultural BMP Advisory Committee
DCR Conference Call
9:30 A.M., January 30, 2009
Draft Summary

Participants:

Gary Moore	DCR	Dave Kindig	DCR
Stephanie Martin	DCR	Craig Brann	VACDE
Mark Hollberg	DCR	Emily Horsley	FSA
Wayne Turley	Holston River SWCD	Robert Bradford	VASWCD Area II
Tom Turner	John Marshall SWCD	Sharyl Walker	NRCS
Jim Tate	Hanover-Caroline SWCD	Brad Jarvis	VCE
Debbie Cross	DCR	Todd Groh	DOF
Phyl Snapp	VASWCD Area IV	Don Wells	VASWCD Area III
Eric Paulsen	VA Dairyman's Assoc.	Libby Norris	CB Foundation
Kristen Hughes	CB Foundation	Darrell Marshall	VDACS
Marc Puckett	DGIF		

The meeting began at 9:30 AM with introductions. Gary Moore led and facilitated the discussion that followed. A summary of discussion topics and the significant conclusions are summarized as follows:

The summary of the December 5, 2008 committee meeting was reviewed, and approved with the following corrections. Correct spelling for Marc Puckett. Correct language for NM-2 Practice to correctly read:

Eligibility

i. This practice applies to crop land, hay land and only pasture lands that receive mechanical applications of collected animal manure. Permanent pasture acres are eligible for cost-share under this practice only if manure is applied to the fields from on-farm sources or is obtained from other farms only if the manure source is located in Virginia.

Old Business

NM-1/NM-2 Subcommittee – Gary reported that the subcommittee has not met since the last TAC meeting and but does plan to meet in March. The rates for NM-1 and NM-2 were discussed and the TAC confirmed that there was no consensus to increase the rate for the NM-1 practice but there was consensus to recommend a rate increase to \$5.00 per acre for the NM-2 practice. The biosolids issues will still need to be addressed by the subcommittee. Jim Tate from Hanover-Caroline SWCD shared that his district has developed a form for the participant to use to address biosolids and plan writing. Jim will forward a copy of this form to the subcommittee.

Continuing Conservation Initiative Subcommittee – Gary and Craig presented the draft guidelines and two of the three practices the subcommittee is proposing for the 2010 Program Year. The TAC reviewed the CCI-VRB (Riparian Filter Strip) and the CCI-FRB (Forested Riparian Buffer) practices and Gary gave an overview of the CCI-SE (Stream Exclusion) practice which he will distribute to the TAC following the call. Recommendations were given to enhance the practices and the committee will meet to review. It is proposed that these new CCI practices be piloted in TMDL Implementation areas only.

Cover Crop subcommittee –The subcommittee has not met since the last TAC Meeting, therefore no activity was reported.

2009 Plan of Work Update – Gary reviewed the 2009 Plan of Work and noted what the TAC has accomplished. The committee has addressed or is currently addressing over 90% of the items agreed upon in August, 2008.

CREP - VACS Integration Group – Gary and Emily reported on the progress of the request the Virginia's State FSA office made to the FSA National Program Management to increase the Federal cost share caps. The Environmental Defense Fund and DCR have both submitted letters of support for increasing the FSA cost share caps. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is willing to send a letter of support as well. Emily has been in discussions with Beverly Preston who promised to consider the request. With the election and administration changes in Washington this request will have to go through the review and approval process with new individuals. Increased cost share caps may be approved on a regional basis. .

FSA new FOIA procedures – Emily Horsley reported on the status of the new procedures being authorized from FSA/Washington. FSA & NRCS have scheduled a partners meeting for February 20, 2009 at the NRCS State office on the legal process for information sharing.

New Business

Definition of “fallow land” – addition to 2010 glossary - Gary presented to the TAC a request from a SWCD to define fallow land as it is used in the SL-1 Practice. The committee did not support developing a definition but did suggest that based on the other language in the SL-1 specification and the intent of the practice, a better solution would be to remove fallow land from the SL-1 Practice Spec and to add new language under the Policies and Specifications Section to clarify the application of this practice. “This practice is not intended to be used to reseed or improve hay or pastureland.”

Agency Updates

Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Libby gave a Legislative Update on the status of the work of the Coalitions request and support for Ag BMP Cost Share Funding.

DOF – Todd Groh reminded the committee of the Spring fire season - February 15 – April 30th. Todd referenced the Ecosystems Conference March 12 & 13th at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville, VA. DOF is a sponsor. Todd also indicated that DOF and FSA have signed the new Certification of FSA Conservation Cooperator Status and Intent to Secure Data agreement that allows FSA to provide the DOF with landowner contact information. This is essential for DOF to provide technical assistance on USDA programs.

NRCS – Sharyl Walker reminded the group about the ICE (Introduction to Conservation Engineering) class that is scheduled for the 1st week of March in Farmville, VA. She also announced that VA NRCS is in the process of reviewing current conservation practice standards that are due for review.

Concerns from the floor

Tom Turner, John Marshall SWCD, raised an issue about the recent NRCS changes to the 382 Fence Standard. With the new LE-1T and the LE-2T practices now available in the TMDL areas and the practice language allowing 2 strands of electric polytape/polywire for the LE-2T practice, Tom is concerned that SWCDs will have issues with participants in regard to when the permanent versus temporary fence requirements are necessary. Gary reminded the TAC that the LE-1T and LE-2T are only available in TMDL designated areas and are in the “evaluation stage”. The Fencing Standard will be added to the next TAC agenda to address how it relates to all other VACs practices.

Date next for TAC Meeting: March 19, 2009 was identified as the next meeting date. The meeting will be in the Albemarle County Office Building at the corner of McIntire and Preston Rd, (Old Lane High School) Charlottesville, VA in Room 241.